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ABSTRACT

This book is intended as an aid for high school English teachers who want to understand visual literacy and learn how to teach it. The first part of the book defines and analyzes the basic structural devices used in filmmaking. The first chapter in this section discusses how the creative use of these devices--composition, lighting and color, movement, editing, sound, and rhythm--influences people and manipulates their responses. The second chapter analyzes the realism of the motion picture medium in light of the inherently illusory nature of film art. The skills and knowledge of the first two chapters are used in the third to achieve a visually literate critique of Frederick Wiseman's film, "High School." The second part of the book concerns the teaching of visual literacy skills as part of the high school English curriculum. The first chapter in this section offers practical suggestions about how to get suitable materials and what not to do in the classroom. The second contains descriptions of various classroom activities spanning a wide range of difficulty levels and includes some reading and writing exercises. The book concludes with appendixes that contain a list of books recommended for students and for teachers, a general bibliography, and the names and addresses of film distributors. (FL)

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The New Literacy

The Language of Film and Television

Harold M. Foster
University of Akron

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Preface

Two different cultures meet in American public schools. Young people who receive most of their information through television and films encounter the book-oriented teacher, who has experienced education as a linear, thoughtful process grounded in the use of written language.

Young people need help. In addition to the skills of reading and writing, they need the basic skills and knowledge necessary to deal intelligently with the constant barrage of film imagery they encounter daily in their lives. They must develop a critical response to the media and a knowledge of how the characteristics of film contribute to its ability to influence them, whether in advertisements, news reporting, documentaries, or feature films. They need to develop the means to protect themselves from the more manipulative aspects of film-portrayed violence, which, though not often imitated, nevertheless has its effects. Young people must not be misled by the apparent ability of films to portray real life, and they need to know that television and movie love is not identical to real-life love. They must not believe that a happy, successful life depends on having the physical appearance or personality of a movie star or film character.

To help students achieve these goals, teachers must themselves be visually literate. They must recognize that film and television constitute, in effect, a visual language which makes these media such a powerful manipulative force. This book is meant to help high school English teachers understand this new literacy and how to teach it in their classrooms.

The first part of the book defines and analyzes the basic structural devices used in filmmaking, an understanding of which could be called the minimal requirement of literacy in the language of film.* Chapter One discusses how the creative use of these de-

*The analysis of film in this book also applies to television because the two media are so similar. Films, whether made for theatrical release or for television, occupy a significant portion of broadcast time, and although television is a less intense experience than film, this lack of intensity is somewhat compensated for by the large amount of television viewing.

vices—composition, lighting and color, movement, editing, sound, and rhythm—influences people and manipulates their responses. Chapter Two analyzes the realism of the motion-picture medium in light of the inherently illusory nature of film art. The skills and knowledge of the first two chapters are used in Chapter Three to achieve a visually literate critique of Frederick Wiseman's documentary film *High School.* This film is particularly interesting because its subject matter is sure to elicit responses from both students and teachers, and the film's cinema verite style makes its realism appear to have unquestionable authority.

Part Two concerns the teaching of visual literacy skills as part of the high school English curriculum. Chapter Four offers practical helps, including the place of visual literacy in the curriculum, how to get suitable materials, and what not to do in the classroom. Chapter Five contains descriptions of various classroom activities spanning a wide range of difficulty levels, and it includes some reading and writing exercises.

Finally, the book provides appendixes that include a list of books recommended for students and for teachers, a large general bibliography, and the names and addresses of film distributors.

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My wife, Greta, provided a thorough reading of the manuscript and gave me outstanding editorial guidance. I also thank Ann Johnson who helped me with this book in the final stages. Finally, I am grateful to George Lind of the National Center for Education Statistics for providing me with worthwhile but hard-to-find information about high school media courses.

Harold M. Foster

I Understanding Visual Literacy

1 Media Manipulation

On September 30, 1973, the movie *Fuzz* (1972) was shown on network television. *Fuzz* depicts Boston delinquents who drench people with gasoline, then set them on fire. Two days after *Fuzz* was broadcast, the crime was actually repeated on a Boston street. Evelyn Wagler was carrying a can of gasoline back to her car when a gang of youths stopped her and forced her to pour the gasoline over herself. The youths then set her on fire, killing her. Boston officials claimed the crime was inspired by the TV film.[1]

Although films and television are for entertainment, information, and art, this incident indicates another side to these media—their ability to influence. The murder of Evelyn Wagler is an illustration of the most sensational aspect of this ability—media-stimulated violence.[2] Although films and television do not transform most people into murderers, their influence often extends over a lifetime and is subtle and difficult to assess.

The enormous amount of time spent in watching films and television by adults and children constitutes one gauge of the influence of these media. In 1966, when the world's population was estimated at three billion, the film-watchers of the world went to the movies ten billion times.[3]

By the time an American teenager reaches the age of eighteen, he or she has spent more time in front of the television than was spent in the classroom.[4] The average college freshman has watched five hundred movies, twenty times the number of novels he or she has read.[5] A thirty-second TV commercial may be seen by fifty million viewers.[6]

Films noticeably influence mass behavior. Occasionally a single film elicits a dramatic response, such as the collective nausea produced by *The Exorcist* (1974) or the assault of motorcyclists on New Orleans inspired by *Easy Rider* (1969). In schools, the influence of the media on behavior is highly visible. A class invited to write a play often submits a television script, and the poems and short stories of students frequently contain references to popular TV programs or TV and film personalities. Conversations of young people often are about recent television shows or movies.

Governments' and propagandists' recognition of film as an instrument of mass persuasion also reflects the power of the media. Germany exploited film for this purpose as early as 1917.[7] Leni Riefenstahl, Nazi Germany's chief film propagandist, created powerful instruments of persuasion with her films *Olympia* (1938) and *Triumph of the Will* (1935).[8] In the United States, the history of the political use of film dates back to 1916, according to one film theorist, who maintains that Woodrow Wilson won re-election that year because of his brief appearance in the epilogue to the popular film *Civilization* (1916).[9] Henry Kissinger, one of the most powerful men of the Nixon presidency, admits to fashioning his own public image after the movies' mythic westerner—the lone cowboy entering the town to shoot it out with the bad guys.[10]

Social scientists and psychologists have conducted scientific studies that reveal the effects of media on people. Most of these studies deal with the effects of media-portrayed violence, and they conclude that media violence can affect behavior.[11] One of the most famous of these studies was conducted by researcher Albert Bandura, who concluded that children are more likely to exhibit violent behavior after watching a violent film or television show.[12] Other studies have shown similar results with adults.[13] Results of a study conducted by psychologist Victor B. Cline indicated that children who were saturated with media violence became desensitized and less likely to show concern or empathy for a victim of violence.[14]

In addition to the outward manifestations of the media's power, there are more pervasive forms of manipulation that are hard to measure and define. Many of the nuances of attitudes, values, beliefs, habits, and lifestyles that are influenced by TV or film are too nebulous to be adequately measured.[15]

The power of film rests partially in the power of the viewing experience. Seeing a film can be an extremely intense experience—possibly more intense than either reading or hearing comparable material.[16] The nature of the viewer's involvement is the reason for this intensity. The intellect will be an important factor only after the film experience is over, when the viewer begins to analyze and probe the elements of the film, but the spontaneous reaction to film is emotional.[17]

A certain amount of psychological risk is involved in an experience that bypasses the intellect. The emotional impact of a film may be detrimental if it is not tempered by intellectual controls, and people must learn to apply such constraints after seeing certain

films to protect themselves against this powerful, primary emotional response.

A Clockwork Orange (1971) is an example of a film that requires an intellectual review. The story concerns a violent street gang that roams England, robbing, raping, and murdering. The violence is portrayed in a highly stylized manner that at times makes it digestible, if not attractive. Director Stanley Kubrick soothes the audience—much as a dentist soothes the patient—with music during the violent moments. For instance, during one of the rape-beatings the hoodlum gives a bright and cheerful rendition of "Singing in the Rain." Kubrick also uses slow-motion photography to depict violence, heightening the film's dazzling colors and echoing the rhythm of the music.

These effects turn the violent scenes into merely uncomfortably pleasant moments, and the viewer who is disturbed by the pleasure derived from them must either deal with the reasons for these feelings or allow the trauma to go unchecked. If those who recoil at such feelings understood the structural devices used to manipulate responses, they would realize that it was not the violence that created the pleasure, but rather the mechanisms used to portray the violence. The viewer who is incapable of understanding how the structure of the film has worked to produce these feelings must live with them and may suffer from their effects. It is conceivable, then, that some viewers of *A Clockwork Orange* are manipulated by the film to believe that violence is enjoyable. For instance, Arthur Bremer made this entry in his diary before shooting George Wallace: "Saw 'Clockwork Orange' and thought about getting Wallace all thru the picture. Fantasing [sic] myself as the Alek but without 'my brothers.' Just a little of the old violence."[18]

Film Devices

The structural devices basic to all films are used by filmmakers to create powerful responses in an audience. An understanding of these devices and how they are used is one of the main skills in acquiring visual literacy. Knowing what these devices are and how they are used to elicit feelings helps the viewer to resist media influence and manipulation and to develop a more sophisticated perception of films.

The structural devices used in filmmaking are composition, lighting, color, movement, editing, and sound. A sophisticated film-

maker uses these devices in a multitude of ways to evoke the desired response in the audience. It is difficult to make rules about these devices to suit all films because techniques are always changing and new approaches are constantly being attempted. A fuller understanding of these devices may depend on a study of how they are used in specific films. The following analysis includes definitions of these elements and examples of how they are used.

Composition

The term *composition* refers to the objects, people, and places that are seen within the camera shot. The word itself attributes a manipulative quality to film, since to compose means to make up, to put in proper order, to arrange. The images that the filmmaker selects are seldom neutral. Like words, most images bear connotations, and, like words in a sentence, most images bear connotations in relation to other images. "The filmmaker creates certain subtle feelings of exhilaration, heaviness, flight, despair, excitement, and so on, not only by the change in distance but by the shift or 'play' in the proportion and balance of masses, planes and lines."[19] For instance, when Cary Grant and company climb the massive sculptured rock formations of Mount Rushmore in *North by Northwest* (1959), the human figures communicate antlike smallness and insignificance in relation to the gargantuan appearance of the sculptured presidents' heads. Humans appear smaller than they are in actuality and Mount Rushmore appears larger. Alfred Hitchcock uses the same technique in *Saboteur* (1942) when Robert Cummings chases the spy on the face of the Statue of Liberty. In *Star Wars* (1976), the hugeness of the enemy space station is conveyed by pictorially comparing it with smaller warships. The warships occupy only a tiny part of the screen, but the space station behind the warships consumes almost the entire screen and is seen in great detail.

The director also can more subtly manipulate audience reaction by the choice of camera distances. Close-ups, which peer at objects, create intensity; long shots, by their distance, imply detachment.[20] Equally important are camera angles and framing. In *Citizen Kane* (1941), a shot of a huge room in Kane's mansion contains a view of Susan Alexander pondering a jigsaw puzzle. She is shown far to one side of the shot and is so dwarfed by this room that the audience is made to feel her loneliness and impotence.

Lighting and Color

Lighting and color are important factors within a shot. For instance, soft lighting and a low level of color contrast (many gray tones) help give many of the shots in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1963) a soft, romantic, nostalgic feeling. Harsh lights, strong color, and strongly contrasting colors help give a cool, detached, modern, existential feel to the metallic world of *The Long Goodbye* (1974) and *Blow-Up* (1966).

Lighting alone may convey feelings. The harsh, revealing white light of the bus station bathroom in *In Cold Blood* (1967) conveys a feeling of naked, hard, psychological truth. Because indoor scenes in most films are shot with the use of artificial lighting, the natural lighting used in *A Clockwork Orange* arouses a sense of strangeness in many viewers. The space monsters of fifties horror films are reincarnated as light beams in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977). A woman and her small son are in an isolated Indiana farmhouse when the dark sky eerily begins to lighten. The frightened mother locks the doors, pulls the shades, and gathers her son to her. Suddenly, light, like scaly tentacles reaching for innocent victims, seeps in from under the door. She quickly places a towel in the crack. A burst of light beams out of the fireplace, and the mother, in panic, gropes to shut the flue. Meanwhile, her son opens his pet's escape hatch and, soaked in the light that is admitted, crawls outside. She tries to grab him but is too late, and when the sky returns to normal, the boy has disappeared. Sudden, inexplicable bursts of light generate the tremendous fear communicated by this scene.

Colors also may be used alone to convey various feelings. The sepia and soft, amber tones of *Romeo and Juliet* (1968) not only remind one of a Renaissance tapestry but also suggest a warm, romantic feeling. *Fiddler on the Roof* (1971) mainly uses earth tones to reflect the farming existence of the peasants portrayed in the film. In *Women in Love* (1969) there is a constant flow of reds and oranges, deep hues, and flesh colors to give the film a lusty, sensuous feel.

Movement

Motion, the very essence of film, was the sole interest of the earliest filmmakers. Audiences flocked into movie theaters and paid to

watch something on the screen that they could see outside without charge. Movement is an intrinsic feature of life—the heart beats, the blood circulates, and the lungs take in and expel air. Perhaps movement on screen is so fascinating because it represents a life force.

Movement has a hypnotic attraction. Fireplaces not only emit warmth but also soothe through the movement of the flames. The hypnotist uses a moving object to hypnotize. "Though it is romantic to believe that the music played by the Hindu charms the savage soul of the cobra," George W. Linden writes, "experiments have shown that the snake will move in rhythmic response to a soundless moving stick. The movement of the flute charms him, not its sound. Human beings are more complex than . . . cobras, but there is no reason to believe that we do not react in the same way to motion."[21]

Motion in film takes many forms. It may mean the movement of people or objects within the shot, the movement of the camera, movement created by mechanical devices within the camera, or movement created by the editing process.

Movement within a shot is perhaps the least cinematic form of film movement since the camera merely records the motion, but it has the advantage of appearing to be very natural. For instance, Fred Astaire creates moods in an audience through his dancing and not through the movement of the camera.

Movement within a shot can also change the mood of a scene without any external help such as camera movement. In *Citizen Kane*, Kane moves out of the background of one shot into the center of the screen to dominate the image, and thereby quite literally overshadows his wife, Susan Alexander. The mood immediately prior to this scene focused on Susan's bickering, but the instant Kane moves into the shot he conveys his power and silences Susan through fear. In *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) a tiny speck of movement appears in the center of the screen. The speck grows and eventually is discernible as a horse and rider coming out of the desert. But the seemingly unnatural length of time required for the speck to grow and dominate the screen conveys an impression of the vastness of the desert and a growing sense of apprehension; the audience expects something ominous to occur and the slow movement builds its anxiety.

Movement created by moving the camera, if used ineptly, can

make viewers unduly conscious that they are, in fact, viewing a movie. When used properly, however, camera movement can contribute an external cadence to a shot or scene that can convey many moods or feelings and create a sense of participation in the audience. The fluid camera movements in the Strauss waltz sequence of *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) create a sense of exhilaration. The vitality of *A Clockwork Orange* can partially be attributed to many fast-paced tracking shots including an extraordinary 360-degree track of Alex, the protagonist, in a record shop.

A camera movement that creates a sense of participation is called "subjective camera technique." In this approach the camera becomes a part of the action, as seen by a character. An example of this kind of movement occurs in the early Cinerama release when a roller-coaster ride is simulated for the audience by mounting the camera itself on a roller-coaster. In most scenes of high adventure, such as battles or sea storms, the subjective camera is used to heighten excitement. In an exuberant dance scene in *Saturday Night Fever* (1977), the camera places the viewer in the position of a man's dance partner, and this helps to increase the intense feeling of happiness this scene arouses.

Motion in a film can also be created by the recording speeds of the camera. Fast motion, for example, is primarily used for comedy effect. Slow motion in the past has been primarily a love scene cliche. Newer uses of slow motion may dispel the idea that there are inviolable bonds between technique and mood. Ever since Arthur Penn used slow motion to prolong the violent machine-gun deaths of the protagonists in *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), slow motion has been used as a device to make dying and suffering even more horrible and grotesque than they actually are.

Sudden movement of the camera toward or away from the subject is often used for shock value. In *The Wild Bunch* (1969), the sudden zoom on William Holden's face at the moment he witnesses someone's throat being slashed intensifies the scene for the audience. A quick change of focus within a scene is another device that can change a mood rapidly. This is done in *The Graduate* (1967), when Elaine discovers her mother to be having an affair with Benjamin. The shot initially shows a horrified daughter with her mother out of focus in the background. Bringing Mrs. Robinson into focus at that moment shocks the audience with the sudden revelation of a wet, disheveled, despairing woman.

Editing

Editing is the filmmaker's most manipulative tool. Film is printed on a strip of celluloid and each photographic image is recorded on a single frame. The illusion of movement is achieved by passing the photographic images past a light at high speed (twenty-four frames per second in sound film), and editing is the process of cutting the strip of film and splicing it together with other strips of film to achieve a desired effect. Two great early Russian silent film directors, Sergei Eisenstein and V. I. Pudovkin, experimented with this simple technical process and achieved noteworthy effects. They used film to sway the Russian masses to support the Russian revolution. Eisenstein discovered that with the careful juxtaposition of two separate images, a third, more lasting impression could be conveyed to the viewer; and Pudovkin experimented with using a series of images to build moods and emotions. Both men were familiar with still earlier experiments with the manipulative power of film by another Russian, Lev Kuleshov.

Kuleshov spliced the same close-up of an actor's face to three very different kinds of scenes. The first showed the face, then a bowl of soup; the second showed the face, then a dead woman in an open coffin; and the last scene showed the close-up of the face, followed by a shot of a small child playing with a toy. Although the face at close range was identical each time, audiences praised the actor's broad range of skills. The audience felt the actor exhibited hunger in the first scene, sadness in the second, and joy in the last.[22]

Today, this form of suggestive editing is most obvious in television commercials. Coca-Cola flashes one bright, fun-filled image after another on the screen. The last image, that of the Coke bottle, then stands alone, yet the public subconsciously associates it with pretty girls, beach parties, and dancing. In the old days of TV cigarette advertising, editing suggested that cigarettes are cool, like streams and waterfalls, inducing the public to forget that they are a hot, smokey irritant.[23]

Both Eisenstein and Pudovkin based part of their aesthetic on the Pavlovian principle of conditioning,[24] and certainly Kuleshov's experiments and modern television commercials echo Pavlovian techniques. *The Birds* (1963) is an example of a modern film employing this kind of conditioning. Alfred Hitchcock so conditioned the audience to fear birds that by the conclusion of the film, a shot of a bird innocently perched on a tree branch was hor-

rifying.[25] Thus, a filmmaker who edits astutely exerts an enormous power over the audience.

Sound

Sound is another important manipulative structural element in filmmaking. Most people recognize the musical cliches that signal Indians on the horizon, the cavalry coming through the pass, the bad guy lurking in the bushes, or the monster rising from the sea. Though they are obvious and trite, such examples nonetheless manipulate the emotions of an audience.

Like other devices, sound must be artfully used if it is to work effectively. Stanley Kubrick's use of "Singing in the Rain" as an accompaniment for an ultraviolent scene in *A Clockwork Orange* works well because the light-hearted music makes this grim, cruel scene all the more grotesque. When "Singing in the Rain" accompanies the end credits, the audience has been conditioned, like Alex in the film, to associate the song with acts of violence instead of with the pleasant song and dance routine of Gene Kelly in *Singin' in the Rain* (1952).

Silence can be as effective as frenzied music. In the film *Z* (1969), when Yves Montand is brutally murdered, silence becomes a reinforcement of deathly pain. Montand is walking through a noisy crowd when a pickup truck screeches into their midst and a man in it strikes a fatal blow to Montand's skull. Sounds to this point have included the noisy shouting of the hostile crowd and the screech of the pickup—a cacophony of sound. Then, at the moment Montand is attacked, there is silence. In agonizing slow motion, he raises his hands to his head and slowly falls. The silence makes the audience feel that it cannot hear external sounds because of the blow. Of the previous din, only a ringing remains, which is also reminiscent of a blow. Suddenly the film resumes normal motion and the external sounds are heard again, but the brutality of this scene has been accentuated by the ringing, painful silence.

Background sounds may also be used to elicit feelings. In one scene of *Citizen Kane*, Kane and Susan Alexander are in a tent on a picnic, very unhappy; the only sound is the laughter of the other picnickers outside. The image of the misery presented by Kane and Susan makes the off-screen laughter seem like anguished wailing.

Film Rhythm

Movement within a shot, camera movement, editing, and sound combine to form the rhythm of the film, an important feature of a film's overall manipulative aspect. There are as many rhythmic variations as there are films. In Billy Wilder's *One Two Three* (1961) the constant flow of movement within shots, a brisk editing pace, and a forceful musical score add up to a rhythm that exhilarates a viewer. In contrast, *Blow-Up* is a controlled, slow-paced film. The editing is hardly noticeable and there is little music, except for a wild party sequence. Movement within the film is restrained and stylistic, and the film's rhythm leaves the spectator with a feeling of slow, controlled sensuality.

Often a film contains different rhythms, as in *Z*. Although *Z*'s rhythm is primarily brisk and exciting, there are moments when movement (external and internal) slows down for the sake of the narrative. The film concludes with the static image of a seated newsman reporting on the fate of the characters in the film.

The rhythm of a film may build to create a growing dynamic and a sense of increasing power. Pare Lorentz's film *The River* (1937) begins with a slow image of water dripping from a thawing icicle. The film grows in strength, gradually building toward its theme—the Mississippi River Valley floods—through the use of dynamic editing, powerful images of fast-moving rivers, a loud and forceful musical score, and a visceral narration. The swelling of the floods is thus beautifully transmitted to the audience through the film's structure.

An understanding of how the structural devices of composition, lighting, color, movement, editing, and sound are used to influence audience reactions is the minimal requirement for becoming visually literate. Students who spend more time watching films and television than they do reading books or sitting in classrooms need to know that films and television are more than instruments of entertainment, information, and artistic expression—they are powerful media, capable of influencing viewers' thoughts and actions. As a first step toward becoming visually literate, students should therefore learn to analyze the structural devices and production techniques of filmmaking and their ability to affect a viewer's responses.

2 The Realistic Facade of Film

The strong sense of reality conveyed by film and television is misleading and makes these media more influential and manipulative than most other forms of communication.[1] Stories are told of TV doctors who have been besieged with pleas for help from real-life sick people and of soap-opera villains who have been insulted on the street while going about their off-screen affairs. For many people in our society, "seeing is believing."

Film and television, however, portray reality with no more accuracy than any other medium such as print. Yet, audiences tend to prefer apparently realistic films.[2] A film that lacks a sense of reality can destroy an audience's involvement. This may have happened to viewers of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919), for instance, because of its obviously painted sets. *Murder on the Orient Express* (1974) may similarly have lost some of its power because of its theatricality—the fact that one can see the actors' make-up, for instance.

Even many fantasy or science fiction films require a sense of reality if they are to work. In *The Red Balloon* (1956), balloons seem to gain a will of their own and are seen congregating and flying together. Special effects (real balloons are used) make these fantastic events seem real, giving this film its power. Although *Alphaville* (1965) is fantasy, its decor is believable, making this film more powerful than *Fantastic Voyage* (1966), a science fiction film whose painted sets detract from its realism. *Un Chien Andalou* (1928), a surrealistic film, uses real objects such as eyes, hands, ants, and dead mules to achieve its effects. Even the film of the children's fairy tale *Beauty and the Beast* (1946) has a very real-looking beast.

Relationship to Photography

The motion picture's aura of reality comes primarily from the nature of photography. Because the image produced by the camera corresponds in some fashion to the image being photo-

graphed, many people are led to believe about film that "All the surfaces are true: they cannot tell a lie."[3]

Unlike the human eye, the camera records objectively, reproducing everything that is within range of the lens when the shot is filmed. This objectivity sometimes results in a realism that is traceable to the camera and not the filmmaker. Thus, the camera records images that are unwanted or unplanned—for instance, when the shadow of a boom microphone, inadvertently recorded by the camera, flits across the television screen, or when the microphone itself baldly enters the shot. In *Phoebe* (1965), a Canadian Film Board educational movie, a careful viewer can see the sound technician reflected in a mirror as he hides under a table, recording the sound.

Even though photographs appear realistic, they may mislead, as the recent controversies over the Kennedy assassination film and the Hearst bank robbery film indicate. The footage Abraham Zapruder happened to make of the John F. Kennedy assassination with his home movie camera has been used as evidence to prove two contradictory theories.[4] In Zapruder's film, a viewer can make out Kennedy's head being violently thrown back. One group contends that Kennedy must have been shot from the front because of this violent backward motion, while another group claims that the thrust of the head was a muscular reaction caused by a bullet that hit Kennedy from behind. Film taken by a hidden camera showing Patty Hearst during a bank robbery has led to a similar controversy. Hearst is seen with a weapon which, to one side, proves her involvement in the robbery, while another side claims that the film shows one of her captors with his weapon trained on Hearst, forcing her to participate.[5] Thus, the Kennedy and Hearst films clouded the truth rather than giving an unambiguous portrait.

Unfortunately, many film viewers fail to look behind film's facade of reality. Even some highly literate people lack training in film perception and fail to see that film is an illusion of reality. Maybe the quantity of media consumed leads to this "illusion of accuracy," since what may seem natural in film to a media-saturated public may seem unnatural to those who are unfamiliar with the media. Marshall McLuhan wrote that some Africans who are unaccustomed to film or television want to know where the body of someone shown in a close-up has gone.[6] What would be natural and lifelike to people who are acquainted with film is unnatural and puzzling to these Africans.

Often people have been exposed to such a quantity of films and have been so conditioned to the medium that even grossly unreal-

istic aspects of film seem real. Some people consider violence as now portrayed in film to be more realistic than violence shown in older films. In *The Wild Bunch, Straw Dogs* (1971), or *Bonnie and Clyde*—modern pace-setters in portraying violence—many different camera devices and stylizations are used. Slow motion, dynamic editing, zooms, and close-ups make the violence more shocking, but not more realistic. The same may be said of some love scenes. Increased portrayal of nudity and sexual activities causes some people to believe that love scenes have become more realistic. Actually, many film love scenes depend upon artificial devices such as filters to achieve their effects. (*Romeo and Juliet* and *Women in Love* are examples). In modern films it is the intensity of the effect produced by the advanced technique that may be heightened—not the surface realism.

Film creates an illusion of reality rather than a reproduction of nature. Film's reality is as controlled and manipulated as the reality of literature, painting, or music. Even motion in film is an illusion. A viewer sees a continuous series of still photographs flashed past a light at sufficient speed to produce the phenomenon called "persistence of vision." This phenomenon, caused by the eye's retention of the previous images, creates the illusion of movement.[7]

Although people may believe that the camera sees an event for them, this is not true. The camera works differently from the human eye. The brain selects points of emphasis in the human field of vision, so that one can look at a crowd and see one person, or at a field and see one blade of grass. The camera emphasizes nothing; it merely records everything within the lens span. The camera operator therefore has to interfere and place the camera so that the picture it records will give the required emphasis.[8]

The camera also records objects differently than the eye sees them. The camera's single eye views only a portion of a scene at a time and lacks the sense of depth that peripheral vision gives to humans. It enlarges everything at close range and drastically reduces everything photographed at a distance.[9] The camera also has some advantages over the eye. It is quicker, and it can define things with greater accuracy.[10]

Altering Reality

A filmmaker may alter reality in several ways. For instance, film time can be extended or shortened and it seldom corresponds to

real time. This altering is most often caused by editing—a simple fade-out may represent an hour, a day, a week, a year, or a decade. In *2001: A Space Odyssey*, for instance, one dynamic cut represents tens of thousands of years. The film opens with a sequence titled "Dawn of Man," set in prehistoric time, in which beings who are half ape and half human are about to discover their intelligence. These ape-people conceive of the first tool, a thigh bone from an animal, and quickly convert it into the first weapon. The last scene in the sequence portrays a battle between tribes in which the tribe with the weapon easily overpowers the other. In the last shot, an ape-man victoriously tosses the bone into the air. The camera follows the spinning bone in slow motion and in close-up, and when the bone begins to descend there is a quick cut to another spinning weapon. This weapon, however, is a nuclear-armed vehicle and the year is now 2001. In an instant, director Stanley Kubrick spans almost all of unrecorded history and all recorded history and transports the viewer into the future. Thus this cut immediately establishes the relationship between the earliest, most primitive weapon and the most sophisticated of modern weapons.

Time can also be changed through the use of fast and slow motion. Although these methods are not as flexible as editing, there are examples of their creative effectiveness, such as the use of slowed time to intensify a moment in *Downhill Racer* (1969). At the end of the film the protagonist, an Olympic skier, played by Robert Redford, has completed a race in record time and expects to win the gold medal. Another racer, however, is coming down the hill at a speed exceeding Redford's. The viewers are made aware of this by cross-cutting between Redford being congratulated and this lone skier descending the hill. As the cross-cutting increases in tempo, tension grows, and just when it appears that Redford is going to be beaten, the other skier falls. At the moment his fall begins, the camera slows the movement, and action that would take a split-second in real time is made to linger for several seconds. This slowing of time heightens the impact and gives to this important moment the film time due it.

Filmmakers are as free to manipulate space as they are to manipulate time. Spatial reality may be changed by the way objects are filmed—that is, by filming them in varying degrees of size. Close-ups, of course, enlarge objects. A head shown in close-up on a large screen is much larger than that head in real life. In *2001: A Space Odyssey*, there is a close-up of an eye. At one point the shot is so tight that only the pupil, the iris, and some of the surround-

ing white of the eye are seen on the screen. Since the film was made in Cinerama, the close-up makes the eye appear much larger than would be expected. Long shots achieve the opposite effect, with every variation in between.

Editing is an important technique that filmmakers use to manipulate space. An example comes from another experiment of Lev Kuleshov, who edited together the following scenes:

1. A young man walks from left to right.
2. A woman walks from right to left.
3. They meet and shake hands. The young man points.
4. A large white building with a broad flight of stairs is shown.
5. The two climb the stairs.

The audience perceived these five scenes as a continuous piece of action, when, in fact, each scene was shot in a different place and at a different time (the white building in scene four was actually the White House in Washington, D.C.). Kuleshov called this "creative geography."[11]

The use of color is another way in which reality is altered in film. Although the real world is in color, people once thought black-and-white films to be more realistic than color films. Many people (particularly in the 1940s and 1950s) were partially conditioned to believe that the black-and-white format was realistic because of the monochrome news shorts shown at movies and the black-and-white television news. That conditioning has almost been extinguished by the proliferation of color television sets.[12]

Early color films were usually musicals or fantasies, and color was seldom used to portray reality. *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) is a classic example of this tradition. The realistic portion of this film, the part that takes place in Kansas, is in black-and-white. As soon as Dorothy steps out of reality into the Land of Oz, the fantasy begins and the film changes to color.

Even when color is used for realistic films it is difficult, if not impossible, to duplicate reality. First, screen colors are almost certainly different from natural colors because of the nature of the film process.[13] Second, light in the real world is diffuse and surrounds a person so that objects lack the color intensity that filmed objects carry. A filmmaker's concern is not with how realistic the colors are but with the effect a color will produce. On the screen, colors are not entirely realistic, but they are highly suggestive.

Most people realize that musicals, light romantic comedies, and cartoons are unrealistic. Nevertheless, such films may have a serious subconscious effect on a person's image of reality. Films of the documentary genre, however, seem very realistic to most people because they show real people doing real things. Part of the impact of such films comes from this sense of authenticity. But the documentary is no more realistic than any other film genre. Because documentary films require the use of structure and form as in any other communication medium (e.g., language in newspapers), they may be more aptly compared to nonfiction literature than to life.

A visually literate public understands film's relationship with reality and perceives film as a created and controlled medium like print or music. People will be better equipped to evaluate and resist the subtle influences of film if they can learn to think of it the way Arthur Knight does: "Although considerable credence is given to the statement 'the camera never lies,' the facts are just the opposite. The camera always lies—or at best gives only a partial truth."[14]

3 An Analysis of the Film *High School*

The film *High School* was made in 1968 at Northeast High School in Philadelphia by former Boston University law professor Frederick Wiseman. The film appears to be a depressing indictment of American secondary education, and since many people accept it as a truthful view of Northeast High in particular and American education in general, the film has aroused critics and generated strong attacks against the educational system.[1]

The film operates like a one-way mirror, allowing a viewer to see and hear students, teachers, and administrators conducting their daily business, apparently unconcerned about the camera. There is no narrator to tell the viewer what to think, and most of the sights and sounds seem natural. This cinema verite treatment gives the film the appearance of external reality.[2]

The appearance of truth and the strong, negative, emotional impact of *High School* make it an ideal film to analyze by applying the criteria from Chapters One and Two. A film is a compilation of certain structural devices which, when used carefully and artistically, give a film much of its power. In this instance, Wiseman structures the film so as to make it seem convincingly real, and a viewer who is naive about these elements is likely to accept what he or she sees as truth. A careful viewing of *High School*, however, reveals a thoughtfully planned and structured film, calculated to present Northeast High School in a negative manner.

Wiseman spent four weeks at Northeast High and came away with about forty hours of film.[3] The final version lasts seventy-five minutes and contains about two hundred cuts, the most obvious of which are from sequence to sequence. (Appendix A contains a chart of the forty-three sequences in the film.)

Themes

Certain sequences of *High School* are edited in a pattern that reveals an intricate thematic structure, and through these themes Wiseman conveys the impression that the high school is oppressive,

militaristic, sterile, cold, and banal. Generally these themes are developed through a carefully placed series of revealing incidents.

One of the major themes of the film is the almost military indoctrination of the students, especially the males. The military-like regime of the school is suggested in some of the early sequences, and as the movie progresses the theme continues to develop until, near the end of the film, it is fully established in sequences that directly link the school with the military.

The initial sequences indicate the importance of blind obedience to orders at Northeast High School. First, the assistant principal in charge of discipline castigates a boy who refuses to dress for gym class. The disciplinarian refuses to listen to the boy's arguments, and he has to dress for gym. The next sequence is about a boy who has been given an undeserved detention. The assistant principal admits that the detention is unjust but tells the boy, "We're out to establish you're a man, that you can take orders."

Two other sequences in the first reel augment this theme. The first of these shows a middle-aged teacher walking through the corridors of the school, checking for hall passes. The rule is absolute: students without passes must get out of the hall. Reasons don't count; no one is allowed in the hall without a hall pass. In the other sequence, again with the assistant principal, a boy is being admonished for hitting another boy. The disciplinarian doesn't appear to be as angry here as he was with the boy who refused to dress for gym—implying that fighting, a manly enterprise, is less serious than nonconformance, which is a threat to the entire system.

The military theme builds to a climax in the seven concluding sequences of the movie. The first of these sequences shows a gynecologist discussing sex with an all-male assembly. The lecturer's viewpoint is simple and military. The male is dominant, and the best men are careful with sex. Barracks jokes are interspersed throughout his discussion. This scene is followed by glimpses of a film about the reproductive system, which is reminiscent of military training films.

The next scene, the first direct link between the high school and the military, shows a young soldier discussing his experience in Vietnam with his former high school gym teacher. They also talk about another graduate who sustained serious injuries in the war. Behind them, playing volleyball, are the future inductees. Then a quick cut takes the viewer to a boys' gym class where an aggressive

and violent game is taking place; this includes sanctioned pushing, punching, wrestling, and clawing. The boys seem to love it.

The following sequence, among the longest in the film, also directly links the high school with the military. It shows the end of a science project in which students stage a simulated moon landing, with three students apparently remaining many hours inside a mockup of a space capsule. This is one of the rare sequences where the high school is shown to provide a supportive atmosphere. The students are allowed to be happy and free in this militaristic context.

A band drill is the focus of the next sequence. Bands are by nature militaristic, but Wiseman makes a stronger connection here by dwelling on the ornamental rifles used by the band.

The film's final sequence forges the connection between the military and the high school, when the principal of the school reads a letter to the assembled faculty from a former student about to go to Vietnam. "I am only a body doing a job," the principal reads proudly. The boy goes on to say that he has donated his government insurance policy to Northeast High School in case of his death, and the principal makes a comment which is the last statement in the film: "To me this means that we are very successful at Northeast High School." Viewers of the film may well infer that Northeast High School has abdicated its role as educator to become an indoctrination center for the military.

Wiseman's later film about the military, *Basic Training* (1971), has close ties to *High School*. Certain scenes in *Basic Training* bring to mind episodes that occur in high schools. Large group meetings of inductees are suggestive of high school assemblies, and the counseling and instruction sessions and the graduation ceremony that closes the film resemble those in high schools. Thomas Meehan, in an article in *Saturday Review*, writes that the "dean of discipline in *High School* is exactly the same sort of man as the drill sergeants in *Basic Training*."[4] Some critics think that the army is shown to be a more benign institution than the high school.[5]

The second significant theme of *High School*, again developed by careful editing, is the indoctrination of female students into expected social roles. The theme is developed mainly in the first half of the film, and, like the military theme discussed above, it is only suggested at first and is gradually developed until it is dealt with directly.

This theme contains five sequences. The first sequence hints at the theme by showing girls exercising in gym class, where conformity is implied because the girls are exercising in unison. The music being played, "Simple Simon Sez," implies that simple-mindedness is a virtue for females. The next sequence that suggests the theme is a rehearsal for a fashion show, where the girls are being shown how to walk and how to dress like women. They are thus being subtly indoctrinated to fulfill expected roles.

The next sequence deals with the theme more directly. A woman is lecturing a female assembly about sex, telling the girls that it is wrong to be promiscuous or impulsive. A lady does not act in that way, she tells the students. The next sequence clearly establishes how a lady behaves in a given circumstance. A girl is being admonished by school officials for attempting to wear a short dress to a prom. A school official tells her that it is nice to be individualistic, but this was not the time or the place. The teenager quickly apologizes for her individuality, having learned that she must fit the role society has set for her.

The theme comes full circle in a sequence where again girls are in the gym, performing submissive acts in unison, this time hanging onto overhead bars as the gym teacher times the length of their endurance.

Lesser Themes

The film contains several minor themes that are not as well developed or organized as the two themes described above. For instance, parent-student confrontations are shown in four sequences, but they lack development and there is no apparent reason for their selection or placement. They are interesting but separate encounters between different generations.

Sequences about teaching that contain some common ground are scattered randomly throughout the film. They always contain a teacher who is talking to students, and almost always the students appear to be bored and distracted. The viewer seldom sees a student expressing an opinion or participating in class.

Wiseman has said that his films star institutions, not individuals,[6] but he does sometimes feature certain individuals in more than one sequence of a film. This device of the minibiography[7] is used in *High School* with the assistant principal. As mentioned above, the man is seen early in the film in the act of disciplining a student for refusing to wear a gym suit, and throughout the film

Wiseman returns to this man in similar scenes. In his last appearance, however, he is not the hard-nosed disciplinarian but is seen teaching a history class, which gives him a new and surprising dimension.

Wiseman uses several teachers more than once in different roles. For instance, a history teacher is discussing the welfare system with fellow teachers at lunch in one sequence and conducting a poll on prejudice among his students in another sequence. In another instance the viewer sees an English teacher reciting "Casey at the Bat," and later the same teacher is reading from the daily bulletin. These minibiographies give added dimension to their subjects without diverting the film from its institutional focus.

Another feature of *High School* is its visual theme, which is developed through wordless sequences that dwell on physical appearances to portray the school's cold, sterile, unfriendly environment. The opening sequence shows row after row of characterless houses and ends with shots of a factorylike school building—a building Wiseman said "looked like the General Motors assembly plant."[8] Other sequences include halls filled with students who don't talk to each other; empty, lonely halls being swept by a janitor; an otherwise deserted hall with a solitary girl leaning against a locker; a typewriting classroom with row after row of typewriters moving in unison.

Editing

The editing process used in *High School* involved more than merely splicing the sequences together. Since the film contains about two hundred cuts, most of the splicing was done inside the sequences. The first sequence with the assistant principal lasts two minutes and was edited eight times. The scene where the English teacher reads aloud from "Casey at the Bat" has a static feel that may cause some to believe it has no movement, when actually this sequence was edited twelve times. These examples illustrate the extent of editing, which, as Wiseman readily admits, imparts a subjectivity to the film.[9]

The internal editing is often subtle and hard to detect unless the viewer is deliberately looking for it. And there is no way for the viewer to determine how much time once existed between consecutive cuts, or which statements or shots have been deleted. Obviously, internal editing can change the entire reality of a situation without anyone knowing it except the filmmakers and the participants in the scene.

Camera Style

Wiseman uses a distinctive camera style in *High School.* A sequence usually opens with a tight shot of an object or person that reveals little about the content of the sequence. These shots arouse curiosity. Then—using a variety of shots such as close-ups, full shots, and zooms—Wiseman shows enough of the situation to reveal what is going on. The rest of the sequence is characterized by an abundance of close-ups. Wiseman's use of a series of intriguing shots before fully explicating a sequence may account for his success in making an interesting film about boredom.

The first sequence with the assistant principal of discipline is characteristic of this technique. The scene opens with a confusing close-up of a boy; as the scene progresses, Wiseman slowly reveals what is happening by panning to the disciplinarian and then panning back to the boy. Their dialogue and these shots fully explain the scene. The rest of the sequence is characterized by close-ups, such as shots of faces, lips, hands, and objects on a desk.

This style is repeated in the sequence where the English teacher reads from "Casey at the Bat." The first shot, an extreme close-up of the woman's face, is not only confusing, but some viewers may regard it as grotesque and ugly. Then several shots of students and a full shot of the teacher establish the scene, and most of the remaining shots are close-ups.

Perhaps the most characteristic single element of this film is Wiseman's use of close-ups, many of which are extremely tight. His camera often moves in as close as is mechanically possible, filling the screen with eyes, lips, and hands.

Close-ups seem to cause two kinds of negative response. First, they tend to intensify the mood of a scene,[10] so if the scene is negative (as most of the scenes in this film are), close-ups make the negative feelings even stronger. Second, close-ups seem to create feelings of confinement, destroying a viewer's sense of space or freedom. The viewer is penned in.

The close-ups in *High School* tend to be hideous and repulsive. One sees the disciplinarian's tightened lips, the English teacher's bad teeth, a boy's bruised nose, the thick glasses obscuring the counselor's eyes, the Spanish teacher's snarling lips as she demonstrates the "S" sound.

Sometimes Wiseman obviously manipulates his viewers' responses by direct, purposeful use of the camera. The sequence in which the assistant principal of discipline is teaching a history lesson

opens with a shot of a wall-poster portraying cavemen; then the camera slowly pans from the poster to the disciplinarian. The connection is obvious and contrived. Another instance of this kind of camera work occurs when the gynecologist is lecturing to the all-male assembly. Describing his examination technique, the gynecologist mentions that it is difficult for him to place his finger into some women's vaginal cavities. The boys find this very amusing. At the end of this sequence, as the doctor points emphatically with his index finger, Wiseman holds a close-up of the finger, as if in humorous reference to the doctor's earlier remark. The third instance is probably one of the finest pieces of camera work in the film. During the marching band's assembly sequence, Wiseman takes a close-up of the rifle butt of an ornamental rifle held by a band member. The camera slowly pans up the rifle until the face of the marcher is in close-up. Holding this simulated deadly weapon is a fresh-faced, blonde, teenage girl—a startling image symbolizing the militaristic indoctrination of innocents.

The above examples are not typical of this film, however, for Wiseman does not often move his camera. Most of the film's movement is created by editing, or it is the recorded movement of people in the shots. The spare use of camera movement probably adds to the sense of reality, because camera movement often seems artificial. When Wiseman does move the camera, it is unobtrusive, often unnoticed by the viewer. This makes it easier to forget that *High School* is an artifice.

Lighting

The lighting in the film adds to the gloom. Since Wiseman must use the natural lighting of the school, he must resort to using a film stock that has a grainy texture and records in low contrast, producing many gray tones. This may give the film a greater feeling of realism, but it also makes it more depressing, just as an overcast, gray day is depressing to some. This form of lighting tends to flatten shapes and details, such as faces, often making them seem nondescript and dull. The stolid faces of the people in *High School* contrast sharply with the faces featured in Hollywood films, where professionally controlled lighting puts a shine on the hair, emphasizes cheekbones, and gives the flesh an athletic, healthy glow.

Background also influences the effect of lighting. In *High School*, most people are filmed against a wall, which contributes to the deadening of their facial features.

Back-lighting is used twice in the film. This technique causes some people to appear more benign than others, partly because a halo effect is achieved when the light comes from a window behind them. The teacher who plays the Simon and Garfunkel record and the teacher who conducts the rap session are filmed in this way, and both scenes are more positive than many of the others.

Sound

The way in which sound is used is an important feature of *High School*. Although cinema verite requires that the sounds be natural, Wiseman breaks this rule at least twice. The first scene in the film has a song in the background—"Sitting on the Dock of the Bay"—which Wiseman selected because of the thematic similarity to the film. However, the artificiality of this song-over opening runs contrary to the film's structural style.[11]

A second departure from cinema verite style is more subtle and occurs in the sequence in which the English teacher uses the Simon and Garfunkel song "Dangling Conversations" to teach poetry. The viewer and the students are apparently hearing the song from the same source—a portable tape recorder—but when Wiseman visually cuts to an empty hall in the next scene, the song continues and, like the deserted hall, becomes an important element in conveying the feeling of emptiness.

The natural sounds in the film sometimes seem to have been artificially doctored, as exemplified in the Simon and Garfunkel sequence. Although the teacher apologizes to her class for the poor quality of the tape recorder, the song is heard loudly and clearly in the film and there are no natural background noises during the song, such as coughing. This doctoring occurs elsewhere in the film. When natural sounds add to the feeling of the scene they are left in, but when Wiseman wants the viewer to hear something clearly, background sounds diminish or disappear. The first scene with the disciplinarian seems very noisy, except during crucial dialogue, when the background noises mysteriously vanish.

The natural sounds in the film, even when unaltered, help create negative feelings about the high school. Recording devices do not record sound realistically. Unaltered sound recording comes through with flaws created or emphasized by the recording machine. So throughout the film, harsh echoes and unpleasant cacophanies of noise add to the viewers' discomfort, and this is transferred to negative feelings about the high school. This occurs with the teacher reading "Casey at the Bat." The recording of her voice

includes a harsh echo, probably created by sound bouncing off the hard walls of the room and amplified by the recording devices. Viewers translate the irritating sounds into negative feelings toward the teacher.

Rhythm

The rhythm of *High School* adds to the film's ponderous, relentless, mechanistic feeling. The film is characterized by long, static scenes, although a few scenes of varying tempo are interspersed throughout. The uniformity of the editing reinforces the mechanistic rhythm—Wiseman uses only the quick cut for editing, never relying on fade-outs or dissolves. The boredom of the school is thus partially conveyed by the unchanging technique.

Verite Incidents

On at least three occasions, the film departs from obvious technique and seems to convey a surface reality of great power. The camera becomes merely a recording device that allows the audience to see these incidents and is not an interpreter and manipulator of reality. In a sense, the camera picked up more than the filmmaker planned.

The first comes when the disciplinarian argues a student into taking an unjust detention. Although the student finally succumbs to the man's authority, he attempts to salvage some of his dignity. He will take the detention, but under protest. A flicker of a smile crosses the disciplinarian's face. This smile underscores the futility of the poor boy's small effort to be an individual.

The second moment comes when students are discussing prom dress lengths with school officials. One of the officials tells a girl that it's nice to be individualistic but. . . . The girl quickly apologizes, "I didn't mean to be individualistic." It is not the words alone that make this small moment important, but something in her voice—perhaps a trace of fear—that epitomizes the sense of regimentation and conformity.

In the third instance, the home economics teacher is rehearsing her students for a fashion show. The teacher points out that one of the student models is wearing the wrong color of stockings for her oversized legs. When the student hears the teacher say that her legs are too big she looks surprised, turning her head to the side and mouthing, "Me?" Evidently no one had ever told her that her legs were fat, nor had she ever thought they were until now. But the remark of this insensitive teacher is likely to live with the

girl a long time, and her sad little "Me?" is indicative of the blow to her self-image.

Omissions

What Wiseman chose *not* to show about Northeast High School is an important element of the film. He omitted scenes of many places where student interaction would naturally occur. There are no scenes of the student cafeteria, of activities such as journalism or drama, of the vocational shops or the library.

Susan Swartz, who was a student at Northeast during the filming, writes, "He managed to miss the whole thing."[12] She found it odd that Wiseman ignored scenes of student interaction, adding that she experienced some of the best teaching of her life at the school. He did show her favorite teacher, however, but only briefly at the beginning of the film. This was the Spanish teacher whose lip curled into the "S" sound that made her look so hard.[13]

Swartz blamed Wiseman's failures more on his techniques than on his intentions. Wiseman admits to no advance research; he began shooting on his first day at the institution, and he spent only twenty-two shooting days, or four weeks, at the school.[14]

One of Wiseman's methods for finding scenes appears to be a rather haphazard way of documenting an institution. He relied on "informants" who led him to interesting material. For instance, he found the teacher who read "Casey at the Bat" through Michael, the student who was lectured on how to be a man by the assistant principal of discipline. Michael approached Wiseman one day and said, "You guys have gotta go see my English teacher."[15] Although this method, along with Wiseman's other techniques, may have led to provocative footage, it was hardly a way of achieving a sophisticated understanding of his subject.

Wiseman uses the method of cinema verite to present a picture that is convincingly real, and his artistic achievement cannot be denied because his audiences come away with a memorable impression of what life is like in this setting. But although the film appears to be realistic and objective, a visually literate person is capable of analyzing the techniques that have been used and of discovering that they only convey an impression that is actually the viewpoint of the director. As *New York Times* critic Amitai Etzioni put it, "Had he [Wiseman] chosen the printed word to convey his findings, they would have been found on the editorial pages, not where straight reporting is filed."[16]

II Teaching Visual Literacy

4 Suggestions for Teaching Visual Literacy

Since film and television obviously are here to stay, schools should accept the responsibility of training literate and perceptive viewers—just as they have always accepted the responsibility for the teaching of reading and writing. The instruction of this new literacy naturally becomes the province of the teachers of English, because the core of all literacy is the effort to communicate.

The approach to visual literacy can be integrated into traditional topics and units found in English courses. A unit on novels can incorporate films made from novels such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* or *A Separate Peace* (1972), and a short story unit can use films based on short stories, such as *Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* (1962), or films structured like short stories, such as *Sticky My Fingers, Fleet My Feet* (1973). A journalism course of study can use TV news and documentary films. American literature classes can use any number of good films based on American literature—or treat American films as American literature in their own right. Writing exercises can use short, artistic films as sources of inspiration and ideas.

Probably the best way to teach film literacy is a course devoted to the subject. Such a course could be part of an elective program which many English departments offer.[1] In a film literacy course, students would be expected to read, write, and talk about films. The analytical method developed in Part One supplies the basic model for students to use in developing their understanding of films and television programs.

Reading and Writing

Reading and writing should not be forsaken in visual literacy courses that are part of the English curriculum. Some educators unfortunately believe that media courses are for those students who cannot read or write well. This author created and taught a film course at Fox Chapel High School near Pittsburgh, where counselors mistakenly advised students that they need not know how to read or

write in the course. Similarly, the media teachers at Pioneer and Huron high schools in Ann Arbor find the bulk of their students to be incapable of reading and writing at literacy levels. This thinking has been reinforced by books such as *Need Johnny Read?* by Frederick Goldman and Linda Burnett[2] (which answers its title question with a qualified no) and Roland G. Brown's *A Bookless Curriculum* (which suggests that the only route to success for nonreaders is a media-oriented curriculum).[3]

This kind of thinking has been a contributing factor in the backlash characterized by the back-to-basics advocates who condemn film electives that forsake reading and writing. Willard Wirtz concluded in his study on the decline of Scholastic Aptitude Test scores that the lowered scores can be partially attributed to elective courses (he uses the film course as an example) where reading and writing are neglected.[4] This neglect should not occur in film literacy courses because students cannot become visual literates if they are language illiterates. One cannot analyze and understand film, or communicate about it, or control its influence, without knowing how to read and write.

The reading of film criticism, for example, is a skill that can and should be taught in high school. Reading film criticism can become a lifelong educational process—in essence, a way of gaining insight and enthusiasm for films that otherwise would be beyond the student's taste and experience.[5] Selection should not be limited to reviews found in elite magazines. Criticism can be found everywhere, and the widest possible range and quantity should be utilized. A good English teacher can match a student with a book of the right level, and the good film teacher can do the same with film criticism. Film criticism also provides good writing models for students.

Selecting Materials

Teachers must carefully select and obtain the proper materials for film courses, but this is not always easy to do. It is difficult to have an entire class see the same feature film or television program at the same time because feature films do not fit into traditional class periods. There is also a rental fee. Movies on television can be assigned, but there are problems here as well. Watching small-screen television with light coming from all directions is not as intense an experience as seeing a film in the theater. Also, TV movies are

often poorly edited. Commercials break moods, and many TV movies are shown too late at night for student viewing.

Short films may be the film teacher's most useful resource, since these films fit nicely into class periods, are free or inexpensive to rent, and often are quite good. The problems with short films are how to get them and how to select them. Short films are obtainable free or at little cost from several sources, such as colleges and universities with film libraries, which are often willing to make arrangements with school districts for use of their films. Freedom to obtain films from colleges or universities may be gained by emphasizing the need for them through student-teaching programs. Also, county school agencies often have films for use in their school districts, and some public libraries have film lending departments. (Some libraries are reluctant to release such materials, however. The Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh, for example, has an entire building devoted to film, but they would not lend their films to school teachers for classroom use.)

Teachers may also obtain films by recording television broadcasts on videotape. For a teacher to do this legally, however, the TV station may have to grant permission. Short films are also available by mail from some sources—for instance, the U.S. Government produces films that can be ordered and that are free. (See Appendix C for address.)

Even if the film teacher knows how to obtain films, there is still the problem of selecting the most suitable films from thousands of titles. It is difficult to follow William Kuhns's and John Carr's advice to "try to discover movies that haven't been annotated and booked and taught to death."[6] Fortunately, most film catalogs have subject-centered indexes. Certain subject headings—such as media, motion pictures, film, television, art, animation, humanities, English, and values—will probably contain films that are useful to English teachers. For reviews of short films suitable for classroom use, check the *English Journal* and *Media & Methods*. An annotated list of short films can also be found in William Kuhns's book *Themes: Short Films for Discussion*.

Films with idiosyncratic or unusual titles may prove to be quite valuable for film courses. Films such as *Ersatz* (1961) and *Boiled Egg* (1963) will probably suit a film course better than *Metal Shop Safety* (1959). *Ersatz*, for instance, features simple line drawings of shapes and images that constantly change form—a car turns into a beachball, the beachball turns into a muscleman, and so on. In *Boiled Egg*, an egg rolls through a surrealistic landscape similar to

those in some of Salvador Dali's paintings. These films display imaginative uses of the medium that require a viewer to accept them for their visual and auditory content. Both films could be used as models for creative writing exercises.

Feature films, despite their length and cost, should not be ignored in film classes. A film program would greatly benefit by the booking of one or two feature films per year. Most schools have assembly periods which provide the time needed to show feature films, and the rental cost of features can be surprisingly low. Some distributors offer reduced rental rates for classroom showings or for showings where admission is restricted and/or no admission fee is charged. Also, field trips to movie theaters for private showings may be possible once or twice a semester.

Media teachers should have access to a television set for use in the classroom, because many kinds of television programs can be used as a means of teaching visual literacy. Even the most static game shows have commercials, and commercials are among the finest materials for the study of manipulative film techniques. Occasionally, movies shown on afternoon television are worth studying.

TV and films are not the only desirable materials that can be used in a visual literacy course. Since film is based on photography, photographs should be incorporated into the course. The passing of *Life* magazine with its excellent photographs was a blow to film educators, but fortunately it has resumed publication. Many other magazines provide good sources of photographs, and magazine advertisements may be the finest source of photographs for studying film composition and manipulative techniques. Stills from movies are available in many magazines and sometimes from movie-theater owners.

Magazines are also excellent sources of film criticism. Film teachers should collect every kind of magazine with film criticism, from *Mad* magazine with its film parodies to the *New Republic* with Stanley Kauffmann's erudite reviews.

Textbooks are a problem. Not every student in a class should be expected to use the same textbook, because it is difficult to find a single text that can cover the range of reading abilities and interests. Also, textbooks drain precious money needed for film rentals. However, there are many good books that can be used for individually assigned readings in the high school library (see Appendix B).

A fortunate film teacher will have access to a variety of audio-visual equipment, such as a television set, record player, tape recorder, 16mm movie projector, super 8 movie projector, super 8 editor, and opaque projector. Also, a teacher should have a room that can be darkened for daytime showing of films.

Teaching Approaches to Avoid

An English teacher who is capable and interested in teaching a visual literacy basic skills course should be aware of some pitfalls in the teaching of film. Most young people enjoy the media, but bad teaching can dampen student enthusiasm for some, if not all, films and television shows.

Teachers should avoid labeling some films as superior (or more "artistic") than other films. This kind of classifying often leads to an overzealous study of certain foreign directors such as Ingmar Bergman, Federico Fellini, Michelangelo Antonioni, or Alain Resnais. Films by these directors are culturally alien to many American high school students. The basic structure of film can be taught more profitably by beginning with films students are known to enjoy, such as *The Towering Inferno* (1975) and *Jaws* (1975). Labeling certain films as more "worthwhile" or more "artistic" than others causes young people to feel insecure about their responses to films not included in their teacher's so-called meritorious categories, and this can inhibit student reactions.

Eventually, the elitist approach to film teaching will do to certain films what poor teaching of literature has done to certain books. *Citizen Kane* will go the way of *Silas Marner* and *Moby Dick* if film teachers are not wary. Students may become so conditioned to associating bad experiences with the "finer" films their teachers recommend that they will ignore all teacher-recommended films.

Film teachers should also avoid making students unduly self-conscious during the film-viewing experience. Asking students to "look for" elements of a film during the viewing runs contrary to the emotional nature of a viewing experience. "The first time you hear a student say that his enjoyment of movies has decreased since he's begun to study them, stop whatever you're doing," teachers David and Dolores Linton admonish. "Chances are he's been counting cuts or making mental notes on camera angles instead of watching the movie."[7] The proper approach to film study is to deal with films retrospectively. Rather than ask students

to watch for something in a film, a teacher should wait until after the viewing and ask students what they saw.

Visual literacy studies should be incorporated into the high school English curriculum as a part of traditional English courses or in special courses established for this purpose. Those advocating the re-emphasis of basic skills in the public schools should look upon visual literacy studies as basic skills needed by all students.

5 Classroom Activities for Teaching Visual Literacy

The activities discussed below are intended to form part of a high school film elective course or a visual literacy unit in an English class. The activities are meant to provide good, enjoyable experiences that will encourage the students' enthusiasm for movies and give them a fundamental understanding of visual literacy. The activities suggested are based on the structural aspects of film as covered in previous chapters. Activities dealing with plot, theme, character, and genre are not included here, but they may be developed for units after the basic structure of film has been taught. The materials suggested for the activities are widely available. All of the films can be ordered from the University of Michigan Audio-Visual Center's film library, which provides a nationwide rental service (see Appendix C for address).

Below is a list of units that can be developed for the high school film course using one or more of the suggested activities. It is suggested that the units be taught in the order listed.

Unit 1—Basic training in perception.

Activity: How to Read a Film.

Unit 2—The structural elements of film: a study of editing, movement, composition, lighting, color, and sound.

Activity: Stories from Pictures.

Activity: Movies and Television Critique Sheet.

Unit 3—The manipulative and illusionary aspects of film.

Activity: The Documentary Film Simulation.

Unit 4—Film criticism.

Activity: Reading and Writing Film Criticism.

Activity: The *Mad* Magazine Film Parody.

Activity: Film Review Panels.

Unit 5—Film scripting.

Activity: Stories into Film Scripts.

Activity: How to Read a Film

Length

Three periods.

Materials

The film *High School.* Any films that clearly demonstrate the structural elements of film may be substituted.

Purpose

This activity should help students become aware of the structural elements of film and how they are used to elicit responses from an audience. The six elements of film that students should learn to identify through this activity are editing, movement, composition, sound, lighting, and color.

Objectives

Students will be able to describe verbally the films selected in terms of their structure; describe verbally how editing, movement, composition, sound, lighting, and color influence audience reactions to selected films.

Procedures

1. Show the film *High School.*
2. Lead a discussion. After the film, begin the discussion by asking the class to describe the visual and aural characteristics of the film. Encourage answers related to the structural elements of the film. Responses about plot or theme do not answer the question. Because certain answers are unacceptable, this discussion must be handled with great delicacy. Tell the class before the discussion that this will resemble a guessing game, and ask students to risk all kinds of responses within the rules of the game. At first the discussion may go slowly, but once there are some acceptable answers and students begin to understand, the discussion should move more rapidly. The discussion should cause students to actively seek out the structural elements used in the film. An interaction might go something like this:

Teacher: Describe the film, referring to what you saw and what you heard.

Student A: I saw teenagers bored with classes and school.

Teacher: I don't believe you can see "boredom." Try again.

Student B: I saw a female student surrounded by lockers in an empty hall.

Student C: The girl was very small and the lockers and empty hall filled most of the shot.

Teacher: Good; what else?

Student D: I saw a boy made to appear meek and powerless in comparison to the assistant principal of discipline by the way the scene was shot.

Teacher: How was the scene shot?

Student E: The camera was at an angle that made the assistant principal of discipline and his desk cover most of the screen.

Student F: The boy seemed penned in by the desk and walls of the room. That gave the viewer a sense of the boy's helplessness.

3. Show parts of *High School* without using sound. Ask students to point out structural devices used to manipulate audience responses while the film is running silently.
4. Show the film *Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* or *Chickamauga* (1963). Students should be able to apply what they learned about the structure of film from *High School* to a discussion of these films.

Activity: Stories from Pictures

Length

Three or four periods.

Materials

As many photographs from as many sources as possible (magazines will be the best source); scissors; a bulletin board or peg board for displaying the pictures on the wall; the film *Film Editing: Interpretations and Values*.

Purpose

This activity is an exercise in perception. Students should learn that pictures, like words, contain meanings and ideas, and they should gain insight into the techniques of editing and composition.

Objectives

Students will be able to create a short story using photographs selected from a random group of pictures; place these pictures sequentially on a wall; find a story in pictures placed on a wall by other individuals or groups; re-edit pictures that were placed on the wall so that they tell a different story.

Procedures

1. Show the film *Film Editing: Interpretations and Values.*
2. Lead a discussion about the film.
3. Distribute pictures to students randomly. Ask students to create a story from these pictures. Students may work individually or in groups.
4. Ask students to place their pictures on the wall in the story sequence.
5. Have the class determine what each story is about by looking at the pictures. The class can go from story to story as a group, or individuals can circulate at will.
6. Ask students to re-edit the pictures already on the wall so that they tell a different story and create a different mood. Remind students about the editing techniques they learned from the film.
7. Have the class determine what each new story is and what mood is created.
8. Give awards. Categories may be best picture, best story, most creative use of pictures, most beautiful arrangement, best continuity, most expressive picture, best editing, best re-editing, best composition.

This is a simple activity that can be taught soon after the structure of film is introduced to students. A teacher may make this activity more sophisticated by discussing aspects of lighting, color, composition, and proportion. Also, the nature of photographic truthfulness can be discussed.

Activity: Movies and Television Critique Sheet

Length

One to three periods.

Materials

Critique sheets designed by the teacher. (A sample is shown on the following page as a guide.)

Purpose

The critque sheets are designed to guide students in film perception. These forms should enable students to make critical appraisals of many films.

Objectives

Students will be able to analyze films and televison shows within the guidelines of the critique sheets; describe films in terms of their structural elements.

Procedures

Have the critique sheets available at all times and allow students to fill out as many as they wish throughout the course. (Use of these sheets should not be attempted until the structural elements of film have been studied.)

Activity: The Documentary Film Simulation

Length

Four to five class periods.

Materials

The film *High School.* Any good documentary film such as *The Selling of the Pentagon* (1971) or *Harvest of Shame* (1960) may be substituted.

Purpose

This simulation is meant to acquaint students with the manipulative and propagandistic techniques that are used in making documentaries. By playing the roles of possible subjects for a documentary, students will learn how such films can distort reality.

Objectives

Students will be able to play the role of another individual; work

Movie and Television Show Critique

Name _____

Title of movie or television show _____

Answer the following:

How did the images (pictures) affect how you felt about the movie or television show?

How did the images help you understand the story?

Did you notice how the film was edited?

Did the camera move? Describe the camera movement:

Was there a great deal of movement within the shots (running, car chases, planes flying)?

Based on the total movement, would you describe this as a fast or slow television show or movie?

How did the lighting affect your feelings or mood?

How did the color affect the mood? Did any one color stand out?

Was there a great deal of background music? Did the background music help or hinder your enjoyment of the movie or television show?

Did background noises add anything to the movie or television show?

Rating (circle one):

excellent very good good fair poor

Why did you give this movie or television show the above rating?

Comments (summarize your impressions and opinions or make additional points not covered above):

in groups to develop arguments; debate other groups with contradictory opinions; describe verbally the propagandistic nature of a documentary film; describe verbally the manipulative aspects of a documentary film; explain how a film is not an accurate reflection of reality; identify reasons why one should or should not allow oneself to be filmed; develop and write outlines of the various arguments; display a high level of involvement in a simulation.

Procedures

A simulation is used for this activity. The setting is a mock trial to determine whether a documentary-film crew should be permitted to make a documentary film about the students' own high school. Begin by explaining the rules as follows:

1. Students are placed into groups with the following identities: school board members, students, parents, teachers, administrators, filmmakers, jury members. One student should serve as judge. Students should maintain their respective identities throughout the simulation.
2. The school board, teachers, and administrators argue against the documentary. The students and the filmmakers argue for the documentary. The parent group can decide which way to argue.
3. The arguments will be based on a film shown before the hearing begins. The film will be used as an example of the filmmakers' work.
4. The groups arguing against the documentary must prove to the jury that the film that was shown does not reflect the true nature of its subject matter—that is, it was manipulative, propagandistic, and unrealistic.
5. The groups arguing for the documentary must try to refute these arguments.
6. Each group should be given five to ten minutes to argue its case.
7. After the formal arguments, open discussion should be allowed. Each group should also present to the jury a written outline of its arguments.
8. The judge should act as moderator, keep time, and maintain order in the proceedings.
9. The jury decides which side wins. The jury should give a

formal explanation to the groups on how it decided which arguments were the most persuasive.

Help the groups organize their arguments. It may be advisable to assign topics to the groups so that arguments are not repetitious. Groups arguing against the documentary can use the following categories: editing and movement, selection, themes, composition, lighting, and color. Groups for the documentary should try to anticipate the arguments of the opposing group.

Establish the groups and give them some time to discuss the project. Show the movie, and give the groups working time to prepare their arguments. Start the trial. Conclude the activity by following procedures 7-9 described above. (Since the activity requires previous work in film, it should not come at the beginning of the semester.)

Activity: Reading and Writing Film Criticism

Length

Three to five class periods.

Materials

One or two of the following films: *Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge; Chickamauga; The Red Balloon; The Golden Fish* (1959). Any short film with a solid story line can be substituted. Numerous magazines containing film reviews are needed.

Purpose

This activity should acquaint students with various kinds of film criticism. Students should also gain practice in writing reviews, using professional reviews as models.

Objectives

Students will be able to read film criticism; select film criticism as models for their own writing; write a film review modeled after a professional review; read their reviews aloud to the rest of the class.

Procedures

1. Place students into groups or have them work individually.
2. Tell students to select the most enjoyable film reviews from a

stack of magazines. Some magazines that can be used are: *Time, Newsweek, New York,* the *New Yorker,* the *New York Times, Ladies' Home Journal, Scholastic Scope, Saturday Review,* the *New Republic.* Students should be given time to browse through the magazines. Local newspapers also can be used.

3. Show one or two of the suggested movies.
4. Have each student write a review of the movie in a way that somewhat resembles the review selected. It may be necessary to specify a length.
5. Award prizes such as: best writing, greatest similarity to magazine review, funniest, least similar to magazine review, nastiest review, kindest review.

This activity may be difficult for some students, and close teacher supervision may be necessary.

Activity: The *Mad* Magazine Film Parody

Length

Two to five class periods.

Materials

A short film with a story line, such as *Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge, Chickamauga, The Red Balloon, The Golden Fish, Why Man Creates* (1968). A large quantity of *Mad* magazines. Crayons, felt-tip markers, and cardboard also are needed.

Purpose

This activity is similar to the Reading and Writing Film Criticism activity. However, some students may find it easier and more fun to imitate *Mad* magazine film parodies than to imitate serious reviews. Drawing skills and some skills in film scripting are required in this activity.

Objectives

Students will be able to write parodies of films modeled on *Mad* magazine parodies; draw pictures or scenes based on the written parodies; work on this project in groups; present these parodies to the class.

Procedures

1. Place students in groups. Allow students some time to browse through the copies of the *Mad* magazines.
2. Show the films that have been selected.
3. Have students write the parodies in class.
4. Ask students to draw some scenes or images for their parodies that are similar to the drawings in the magazines.
5. Ask students to present their parodies to the class.

Activity: Film Review Panels

Length

One class period every three weeks.

Materials

A list of approved films to be used for analysis in the panel discussion.

Purpose

This activity provides a format for students to use in reviewing films. It is also a way of noting the students' increasing ability to perceive and understand film structure.

Objectives

Students will be able to demonstrate verbally an understanding of the structure of film; demonstrate verbally the ability to judge and rate motion pictures intelligently; work as part of a panel.

Procedures

1. Provide students with a list of approved films that can be used for analysis in the panel discussion. The list should include all kinds of films that can be seen in local theaters, on local college campuses, at museums, and on television.
2. Ask students to participate in two or three panel discussions throughout the semester. These panels should review films that several students have seen. Panel reviews should reflect the increasing awareness of film structure that the students have been gaining.

Activity: Stories into Film Scripts

Length

Two to three class periods.

Materials

Short stories. Examples of film scripts (Pauline Kael's *The Citizen Kane Book* is one good source.[1])

Purpose

Through the procedure of transferring aspects of a short story into a film script, students should learn the characteristics of film structure, film language, and film scripting.

Objectives

Students will be able to write scenes for movies based on segments of a short story; use structural elements of film in scripts.

Procedures

1. Have each student select and read a short story.
2. Ask students to write a movie script for a scene from the short story. Show students examples of film scripts.
3. Ask students to describe the editing, movement, composition, lighting, color, and sound in their scripts.

Independent Studies

Some students should be encouraged to take independent studies for credit throughout the course of the semester. Examples of such studies or projects follow.

1. A group of students may make a super 8 film that incorporates many of the concepts of film structure and language as taught in the course. Movies can be topical and deal with subjects such as houses, cars, water, motorcycles. Autobiographies or film essays about friends can be made, or students can copy Hollywood films and make a horror movie or western. Student films should be more than home movies. They should reflect some of the concepts developed in the course and exemplify thought about film structure.

2. A group of students can be appointed as editors of a class magazine containing examples from the work done by them and their classmates during the semester. This magazine would provide a basis for a review of the course and would be a way of sharing students' work.
3. Individuals or groups can work to produce their own magazines containing film reviews, drawings of scenes or shots, scripts, film trivia games. Any item dealing with film concepts or skills covered in the course would be acceptable.
4. Some students may find research projects appealing. An independent project can acquaint students with important directors and films. Students can learn about great Hollywood directors, the making of major films, the studio system, foreign films. These projects can lead to magazine articles or research papers.
5. Independent readings should be strongly encouraged. Since it is difficult to find a single film book that is equally suitable for every individual in a class, independent studies provide students with the opportunity to read at their own level about the subjects of their choice. Although advanced students have a wide variety of books to select from, there are few books, unfortunately, for less advanced students. Appendix B contains a list of books that can be used for independent studies.
6. Students who lack the equipment or money to make films yet are interested in doing creative film work may try writing a film script. Since many of the suggested activities are attempts at minor scripts, an independent study can involve a somewhat longer effort. Perhaps a student can write an autobiographical film script or adapt parts of a novel, play, short story, or poem. The script should reflect film concepts and skills covered in the class.
7. A group of students can undertake a schoolwide or classwide statistical study of viewing habits and film and television interests. The study can involve students' polling other students regarding how much television they watch, how many movies they see, and which television shows and movies are their favorites. Students can also develop questionnaires, find systems for distributing and collecting them, conduct spot interviews. Results can be compiled and presented to the class.

Assignments

Teachers can provide greater flexibility for accommodating individual interests by developing categories from which students select a certain number of assignments. The obvious categories are written, oral, and creative assignments.

Written assignments include film reviews, written group projects, commercial criteria sheets, and movies and television critique sheets. Oral presentations include panel discussions, oral film reviews, class discussions. A student who dislikes participating in oral activities might select written or creative projects. Creative projects include script writing, drawings of scenes or images, collages, filmmaking, or approved student suggestions.

A record-keeping system of individual folders will aid the teacher in making periodic assessments of each student's work. The teacher can write comments and suggestions to students on the folders.

Conclusion

Film and television will become even more exciting in the future. Television screens will become larger and the color will become sharper. The number of program choices will proliferate greatly because of UHF and cable television, and "pay-cable" will make it possible to buy major events, concerts, or plays on television. Cassettes and videodiscs already allow individuals to own film libraries. Film viewing experiences will become even more sensational with wrap-around screens and multiple images, and the three-dimensional images of holographic cinema will provide films that are presently beyond the imagination.

Future generations will grow up in a world where film and television provide a stronger impact, more excitement, and flashier entertainment than schools can ever hope to do. Since film and television may provide the only sources of information that many people will willingly accept, American schools may have to change drastically to meet the needs of future generations. Schools may someday have to consider visual literacy a survival skill.

It is hoped that this book will help teachers begin to cope with and teach this form of communication that now dominates our society in so many ways. Teachers must not allow young people to deal with the media without defenses. It may be a difficult task, but teachers can provide students with the capabilities of controlling these complex and remarkable media. With the aid of these teachers, people may come to co-exist peacefully and profitably with modern technology.

Appendixes

Appendix A
Analysis of Sequences in *High School*

Description of Sequence	Attitude, Point of View, or Purpose
1. Track shot of suburbs where school is located. Shot continues until school is seen.	Establishes atmosphere of factorylike school building.
2. Halls crowded with students.	Impersonality of school.
3. A male history teacher in class.	Hard-looking teacher.
4. Female Spanish teacher.	Hard-looking teacher.
5. Band room rehearsal. Drum section only.	Ambiguous.
6. Assistant principal of discipline castigating boy for not wearing gym suit.	Harsh, regimented nature of school.
7. French class with male teacher.	Establishes routine of school.
8. A father, his daughter, and guidance counselor discussing academic progress of daughter.	Ambiguous.
9. Disciplinarian's office again. This time he is arguing with male student who believes he has been given an undeserved detention.	Clearly establishes motif of following orders. Begins militaristic theme.
10. Track shot of male teacher from behind as he checks hall passes.	Shows regimented, militaristic, untrusting nature of high school.
11. A girls' gym class where girls are doing exercises to music.	Shows school requiring that subservient, mindless tasks be done by female students.
12. An older female English teacher reads "Casey at the Bat."	Boring, irrelevant curriculum.
13. Girls batting balls in gym class.	Transitional.
14. Boys in a cooking class.	Ambiguous.
15. Fashion show rehearsal in auditorium.	Shows concepts of beauty and grace that are applied insensitively. Motif of woman's role in society.
16. Typing teacher administers test.	Regimentation, conformity.
17. Male health teacher discussing family structure with class. Tells class that mothers in Jewish families are dominating.	Shows indoctrination of attitudes. Also indicates prejudices and biases.

Description of Sequence	Attitude, Point of View, or Purpose
18. Woman lecturing to girls' assembly about promiscuity and the pill.	Continues the motif of women in society. Shows narrow attitudes that are taught to students.
19. Discussion among administrator, teacher, and several students about proper dress for a prom.	Shows conformity and regimentation desired by school.
20. Girls hanging from bars in gym class.	Shows degrading activities female students are required to perform.
21. Janitor sweeping empty halls.	Feelings of loneliness; a transitional device.
22. English class where a popular song is being analyzed as poetry. Scene ends with tape recording of song.	Ambiguous. Some people believe that this shows relevant, up-to-date teaching. Others feel this shows a futile, inadequate effort to relate to students.
23. Shot of hall with one girl leaning against wall. Quick cut to janitor.	Feelings of loneliness; transitional.
24. Disciplinarian's office where boy is being punished for punching another student.	Breaks mellow feeling created by song in previous scene. Shows harsh realities of high school life.
25. Mother, daughter, and counselor discuss daughter's behavior problems.	Exposes attitudes of older generation toward younger.
26. Female counselor discusses college with student and her parents.	Conveys sense of student as product.
27. Father and daughter from preceding sequence, this time with another daughter and the same counselor.	Establishes attitudes of older generation toward younger.
28. Empty halls.	Feelings of loneliness; transitional.
29. Four teachers eat lunch and discuss welfare.	Shows teachers' prejudices in informal situations.
30. Assistant principal of discipline teaches class about labor unions.	Ambiguous. Establishes new role for disciplinarian.
31. History teacher teaching a class about race relations. He takes a poll about attitudes toward blacks.	Shows half-hearted, embarrassing attempt at openmindedness.
32. Chorus during a practice session.	Transition.
33. Rap session where students freely and openly discuss their dislike of school.	Most positive scene in film. Shows kids talking. Establishes anti-school feelings of students.

Description of Sequence	Attitude, Point of View, or Purpose
34. English teacher who reads "Casey at the Bat" reads daily bulletin.	Re-establishes idea that the school is primarily a dull, deadening place.
35. Crowded halls with a policeman in them.	Transitional.
36. Boys act like girl cheerleaders.	Reversal of sex roles seems grotesque.
37. Gynecologist lectures about sex to boys' assembly.	Establishes sexual indoctrination of male students.
38. Movie about physiology of sexual activity.	Reminiscent of military training.
39. Soldier discusses Vietnam with former gym teacher in school yard.	Direct bond is established between school and military.
40. Boys aggressively tumbling after large ball in gym class.	Reinforces military ties through the controlled aggressiveness of the gym.
41. Simulation of moon flight re-enacted by students.	Makes another connection between federal government and high school.
42. Band performance. Shows girls with rifles.	Strongly suggests militaristic training in high school.
43. At faculty meeting, principal reads letter from student who is about to go to Vietnam. He wills his life insurance to the high school if he should be killed.	Summation of the film's main theme. Principal reads, "I'm only a body doing a job," which is the whole point of the film.

Appendix B
Suggested Film Readings

Books recommended for English teachers are listed below. Those suggested for independent reading by students are marked with asterisks.

*Agel, Jerome, ed. *The Making of Kubrick's* 2001. New York: New American Library, Signet Books, 1970.

Bazine, André. *What Is Cinema?* Hugh Gray, ed. and trans. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.

Bluestone, George. *Novels into Film.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.

*Bobker, Lee R. *Elements of Film.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1969.

Casty, Alan. *Development of the Film: An Interpretive History.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973.

Cline, Victor B., ed. *Where Do You Draw the Line?* Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1974.

*Culkin, John M., and Schillaci, Anthony, eds. *Films Deliver: Teaching Creatively with Film.* New York: Citation Press, 1970.

Debrix, J. R., and Stephenson, Ralph. *The Cinema as Art.* Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1968.

Eisenstein, Sergei. *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory.* Jay Leyda, ed. and trans. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Harvest Books, 1949.

——. *The Film Sense.* Jay Leyda, ed. and trans. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Harvest Books, 1947.

*——. *Potemkin.* Gillon R. Aitken, trans. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968.

Feyen, Sharon, and Wigal, Donald, eds. *Screen Experience: An Approach to Film.* Dayton, Ohio: Geo. A. Pflaum, 1969.

*Gessner, Robert. *The Moving Image: A Guide to Cinematic Literacy.* New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968.

Giannetti, Louis D. *Understanding Movies.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972.

*Huss, Roy, and Silverstein, Norman. *The Film Experience: Elements of Motion Picture Art.* New York: Harper and Row, 1968.

*Kael, Pauline. *The Citizen Kane Book.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1971.

*——. *I Lost It at the Movies.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1965.

*——. *Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang.* Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, Little, Brown, 1968.

*Knight, Arthur. *The Liveliest Art.* New York: New American Library, Mentor Books, 1957.

Kracauer, Siegfried. *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1960.

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Appendix C
Film Distributors

The following is a list of names and addresses of film distributors who rent and sometimes lend 16mm prints.

American Cinema Editors, 422 S. Western Avenue, Los Angeles, Calif. 90020.

American Film Institute, Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C. 20566.

Cinema 5 Ltd., 595 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Contemporary/McGraw-Hill Films, 1221 Ave. of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10020.

Film Images, 1034 Lake St., Oak Park, Ill. 60301.

Films Inc., 1144 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, Ill. 60091.

Grove Press Film Div., 196 W. Houston St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

Janus Films, 745 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Leacock Pennebaker, 56 W. 54th St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

Macmillan Films/Audio-Brandon Films, 34 MacQuesten Pkwy. S., Mount Vernon, N.Y. 10550.

McGraw-Hill Films, 1221 Ave. of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10020.

Museum of Modern Art Film Library, 11 W. 53rd St., New York, N.Y. 10019.

National Audiovisual Center, 4205 Suitland Rd., Suitland, Md. 20023.

Paramount Pictures, 111 E. Wacker Dr., Chicago, Ill. 60601.

Pyramid Film Productions, P.O. Box 1048, Santa Monica, Calif. 90406.

Swank Motion Pictures, 201 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63166.

Time-Life Multimedia, Time-Life Bldg., Rockefeller Center, New York, N.Y. 10020.

United Artists 16, 729 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019.

Universal 16, 445 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

University of Michigan Audio-Visual Education Center, 416 Fourth St., Ann Arbor, Mich. 48103.

Warner Brothers, Non-Theatrical Division, 4000 Warner, Burbank, Calif. 91505.

Zipporah Films, 54 Lewis Wharf, Boston, Mass. 02110.

Notes

Chapter 1

1. Eugene H. Methvin, "What You Can Do about TV Violence," *Reader's Digest* 107 (July 1975), p. 185.

2. Warren Weaver, Jr., "Court Ruling Lets Girl, 9, a Victim of Sex Assault, Sue a TV Network," *New York Times,* 25 Apr. 1978, sec. 1, p. 26: [Results of a study conducted by ABC indicate that] "22 percent of crimes committed by juveniles had been suggested by television programs."

3. W. R. Robinson, ed., *Man and the Movies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), p. 4.

4. Martin A. McCullough, "Mass Media Curriculum: Fantasy or Reality?" in *Readings for Teaching English in Secondary Schools,* ed. Theodore Hipple (New York: Macmillan, 1973), p. 234.

5. Robinson, p. 4.

6. Robert A. Lucking, "Television: Teaching the Message and the Massage," *English Journal* 63 (Oct. 1974), p. 75.

7. Leif Furhammer and Folke Isaksson, *Politics and Film,* trans. Kersti French (New York: Praeger, 1971), p. 11: "A letter of 4 July 1917 from the German Chief of Staff, General Erich Luckendorff, to the Imperial Ministry of War in Berlin, gave a top-level evaluation: 'The war has demonstrated the superiority of the photograph and the film as means of information and persuasion.'"

8. Penelope Houston, *The Contemporary Cinema* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 127.

9. Furhammer and Isaksson, p. 9.

10. James Chace, "Review of *Kissinger* by Marvin Kalb and Bernard Kalb," *New York Times Book Review* 79 (25 Aug. 1974), p. 1.

11. Emily S. Davidson, Robert M. Liebert, and John M. Neale, "Aggression in Childhood: The Impact of Television," in *Where Do You Draw the Line?,* ed. Victor B. Cline (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1974), pp. 119-120.

12. Albert Bandura, "What TV Violence Can Do to Your Child," in *Violence and the Mass Media,* ed. Otto N. Larson (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 126.

13. Ibid., pp. 129-130.

14. Victor B. Cline, Steven Courrier, and Roger G. Croft, "The Desensitization of Children to TV Violence," in *Where Do You Draw the Line?,* ed. Victor B. Cline (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1974), pp.

147-155. Researchers divided children into two groups. One group had a high degree of exposure to television; the other had seen little TV. The researchers showed both groups a violent scene from a movie. While the children were watching the movie, the researchers were measuring pulse rate and heartbeat as indicators of emotional stimulation. The scientists found that the children who had low exposure to television were greatly affected by the film. Those who had seen a great deal of television, however, had very little reaction to the violent film.

15. Furhammer and Isaksson, p. 66.

16. Robert Gessner, *The Moving Image: A Guide to Cinematic Literacy* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968), p. 228.

17. The following critics and theorists have made similar points: Andrew Sarris, *The Primal Screen: Essays on Film and Related Subjects* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), p. 134: "The great appeal of movies is emotional rather than intellectual."

Walter Lassally, "Communication and the Creative Process," in *Sight, Sound, and Society: Motion Pictures and Television in America,* ed. David Manning White and Richard Averson (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. 89: "In the appreciation of a film during its projection, intellect plays a much smaller part than the emotions, unless we deliberately keep the critical faculty active, in which case it is my firm belief that we are interfering with the proper natural process of communication and thus being unfair to the film in the bargain.

V. I. Pudovkin, in Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 160: "The film is the greatest teacher because it teaches not only through the brain but through the whole body."

Ingmar Bergman, "Film versus Literature," in *Film and Society,* ed. Richard Dyer MacCann (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), p. 144: "I would say that there is no art form that has so much in common with film as music. Both affect our emotions directly, not via the intellect. And film is mainly rhythm; it is inhalation and exhalation in continuous sequence."

18. "One Sick Assassin," *Time* 100 (14 Aug. 1972), p. 23.

19. Roy Huss and Norman Silverstein, "Tone and Point of View," in *Film and Literature: Contrasts in Media,* ed. Fred H. Marcus (Scranton, Pa.: Chandler, 1971), p. 67.

20. Ibid., pp. 63-64.

21. George W. Linden, *Reflections on the Screen* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1970), p. 205.

22. Ernest Lindgren, *The Art of the Film* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 81.

23. An in-depth analysis of the means of subconsciously manipulating people through advertising can be found in Wilson Bryant Key, *Subliminal Seduction: Ad Media's Manipulation of a Not So Innocent America* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973).

24. Furhammer and Isaksson, p. 16.

25. Bird attacks portrayed in this film are sudden and horrible. Viewers witness birds swooping upon innocent children at a party; they see a bird

slashing at a victim's eyeless corpse. The atmosphere of sudden and unexplained bird attacks hangs so heavily over the film that any shots of birds arouse fear. One scene shows a woman seated on a bench with birds perched on a tree behind her. In another context this scene would be pleasant and restful, but here it elicits horror because the character is oblivious to the birds and because the audience, conditioned to associate birds with violence, fears instant doom.

Chapter 2

1. Allardyce Nicoll, "Film Reality," in *Film and Literature: Contrasts in Media,* ed. Fred H. Marcus (Scranton, Pa.: Chandler, 1971), p. 195.

2. J. P. Mayer, *Sociology of Film* (New York: Arno Press and the *New York Times,* 1972), p. 86.

3. Parker Tyler, *The Shadow of an Airplane Climbs the Empire State Building* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972), p. 74.

4. *Newsweek* 85 (23 June 1975), p. 21.

5. "Deepening Mystery of Patricia Hearst," *U.S. News and World Report* 76 (29 Apr. 1974), p. 40.

6. I. C. Jarvie, *Movies and Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), p. 220.

7. David Linton and Dolores Linton, *Practical Guide to Classroom Media* (Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum/Standard, 1971), p. 83.

8. George Bluestone, *Novels into Film* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 17.

9. Arthur Knight, "The Anatomy of Motion Pictures," in *Using Mass Media in the Schools,* ed. William D. Boutwell (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962), p. 41.

10. George W. Linden, *Reflections on the Screen* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1970), p. 70.

11. V. I. Pudovkin, *Film Technique and Film Acting,* trans. Ivor Montagu (London: Mayflower, 1958), pp. 88-89.

12. Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. vii-viii.

13. William Johnson, "Coming to Terms with Color," in *The Movies as Medium,* ed. Lewis Jacobs (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1970), p. 219.

14. Knight, p. 41.

Chapter 3

1. Pauline Kael, *New Yorker* 45 (18 Oct. 1969), p. 200: *"High School* is so familiar and so extraordinarily evocative that a feeling of empathy with the students floods over us."

Joseph Featherstone, "Documentary: *High School,*" *New Republic* 160 (21 June 1969), p. 30: "Northeast is no worse than other schools in this

country . . . its main defect is that it isn't a school at all, in the sense of being a place where people learn important things about the world: it teaches students that they are just bodies, going through the motions of getting through. The teachers are constantly appealing for denial and restraint, but they are increasingly unable to explain the purpose of all this sacrifice. The old appeals to uplift and purpose aren't working. The kids sit, glassy-eyed. Nothing seems to reach them. No single reform, no one revolution will change this. A condition of the spirit is hard to cure."

James Cass, "Education in America: Don't You Talk—Just Listen!" *Saturday Review* 52 (19 Apr. 1969), p. 57: "A new documentary film recording life in a middle-class, predominantly white, large-city high school provides a terrifyingly intimate view of the system in operation."

Peter A. Janssen, "The Last Bell," *Newsweek* 73 (19 May 1969), p. 102: "The most frightening thing about *High School* is that it captures the battlefield so clearly; the film is too true."

2. The term *cinéma vérité* was originated by French critics in the 1950s to describe the true-to-life documentary films that were becoming prominent at the time. The cinema verite style attempts to remove apparent superfluities and obvious artificialities. Cinema verite films are characterized by the absence of acting, narration, interviews, and background music. They usually employ certain similar technical devices—such as portable, hand-held equipment that allows filming to be done anywhere and a fast film stock that records in natural light. These techniques often produce a poor-quality, grainy picture which, as it happens, helps to increase the sense of reality in the film.

3. Alan Rosenthal, *The New Documentary in Action: A Casebook in Film Making* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 72.

4. Thomas Meehan, "The Documentary Maker," *Saturday Review* 55 (2 Dec. 1972), p. 14.

5. Stephen Mamber, *Cinema Verite in America: Studies in Uncontrolled Documentary* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1972), p. 242.

6. Beatrice Berg, "I Was Fed Up with Hollywood Fantasies," *New York Times* 1 Feb. 1970, sec. 2, p. 26.

7. Chandra Hecht, "Total Institutions on Celluloid," *Society* 9 (Apr. 1972), p. 47.

8. Rosenthal, p. 73.

9. Chuck Kraemer, "Fred Wiseman's *Primate* Makes Monkeys of Scientists," *New York Times*, 1 Dec. 1974, sec. 2, p. 31.

10. Mamber, p. 245.

11. Rosenthal, p. 73.

12. Susan Swartz, "The Real Northeast," *Film Library Quarterly* 6 (Winter 1972-73), p. 13.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., p. 72.

15. Ibid., pp. 71-72.

16. Amitai Etzioni, "*Primate* Is Unnecessarily Cruel to Scientists," *New York Times*, 15 Dec. 1974, sec. 2, p. 33.

Chapter 4

1. The latest survey conducted by the U.S. Office of Education shows that in 1972-73 English department elective courses in film and television were offered at 6.2 percent (1,416) of U.S. secondary schools. Enrollment for these courses totaled 0.8 percent (139,978) of all U.S. secondary school students (18,577,234). Logan K. Osterndorf and Paul J. Horn, *Course Offerings, Enrollments, and Curriculum Practices in Public Secondary Schools, 1972-73* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, 1976), p. 34.

2. Frederick Goldman and Linda R. Burnett, *Need Johnny Read? Practical Methods to Enrich Humanities Courses Using Films and Film Study* (Dayton, Ohio: Geo. A. Pflaum, 1971).

3. Roland G. Brown, *A Bookless Curriculum* (Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum/Standard, 1972), p. 2.

4. Harold G. Shane, "An Interview with W. Willard Wirtz," *Phi Delta Kappan* 59 (Oct. 1977), p. 84.

5. Pauline Kael, *I Lost It at the Movies* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965), p. 308.

6. William Kuhns and John Carr, *Teaching in the Dark: Resource Guide for Movies in America* (Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum/Standard, 1973), p. 8.

7. David Linton and Dolores Linton, *Practical Guide to Classroom Media* (Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum/Standard, 1971), p. 88.

Chapter 5

1. Pauline Kael, *The Citizen Kane Book* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971). Other examples of film scripts are Luis Buñuel, *Three Screenplays* (New York: Orion Press, 1969); Sergei Eisenstein, *Potemkin*, trans. Gillon R. Aitken (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968); Ingmar Bergman, *Four Screenplays*, trans. Lars Malmstrom and David Kushner (New York: Simon and Schuster, Clarion Books, 1960).

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